ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An image processing method and apparatus for compressing an image preserves the characteristics of the original picture image in the post compression picture image. A 4 pixel region (for example) is selected from among the original picture image pixels. The values of the upper left pixel, the upper right pixel, the lower left pixel, and the lower right pixel, e.g., are successively determined. If the pixel value of any one of the selected 4 pixels is determined to be a value representative of a line of a line drawing, then a value for a pixel of the compressed picture image corresponding to the 4 pixel region selected from the original picture image is set to the representative value. If none of the 4 pixels in the selected region have a value representative of a line in a line drawing, the value of the pixel of the compressed picture image is established to be a value corresponding to a region in which there is no line of a line drawing.